

# UGAIRISH Project

Newsletter April 2017

## **Editors Note:**

Thank you for your continued support and donations over the past year. They are making a big difference to the lives of some of the most needy communities in Southern Uganda.

This is our 8<sup>th</sup> annual UgaIrish Newsletter in which you can find out more about our monthly support and on going projects in Bbaale Landing site on Lake Victoria. Also you can read about our volunteer trip in 2016 and the plans for this year's trip in June.

Siobhan Kinsella, Chairperson

## **Updates:**

### Bbaale Landing Site:

Bbaale Landing site is a remote village on the shores of Lake Victoria which UgaIrish have been supporting since they first visited it in 2013. Through the annual volunteer visits and monthly donations the community have the benefit of clean drinking water, an eco-sanitation block, twice monthly visits from a doctor and a nurse, a Ladies Co-operative, Litter Wardens and a thriving 4-classroom kindergarten and primary school.



The appreciation this community has for the work of the UgaIrish Charity shows in their faces and enthusiasm each year when the volunteers visit the village. They have hope in a future for their own

and their children's lives.

### Bbaale Kindergarten\Primary School:

In response to the lack of infant school education in the village UgaIrish funded the construction of a temporary 2-classroom Kindergarten school. The school opened its doors to 40 children in January 2015.

However, as the village is on government land, UgaIrish had to get planning permission from the government to build a permanent school. The permission has been granted and we are in the process of land registration with the local council. In the meantime more temporary classrooms have been added to the school and there are now over 70 children attending the 4-classroom school – Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class.

### Child Sponsorship Programme:

To help with the on-going running costs of the Kindergarten\Primary School a child sponsorship program has been introduced whereby sponsors fund a child while he attends the school. The cost is €50 a year which covers the uniform, daily porridge, medical care, insurance and school supplies. Meanwhile our sponsorship programme for older children continues, with children in primary

and secondary schools in the area, including some boarding.

#### Ladies Co-operative:

A very successful co-operative was set up in 2014 for the women living in Bbaale and the surrounding area. They have learnt knitting skills and are supplied with wool, they are taught horticulture on a weekly basis by a local woman and grow their own vegetables and maize. Last year the volunteers bought 2 sewing machines and a tailor has been hired to teach the women how to use the machines. As a result these women, who learn very quickly, are now sewing the uniforms for their children and reusable sanitary pads for themselves and their daughters. It is hoped that as their skills improve the ladies will start selling their products.

#### Bbaale Litter Wardens:

Litter is a big problem in Uganda as there are no garbage collections or recycling facilities. Most of the time rubbish is burnt in pits but a lot of the Ugandans seem to have a culture of dropping litter on the ground. Bbaale Landing Site is on the shores of Lake Victoria with a wind frequently blowing the rubbish around. It needs to have some sort of litter control, so a committee of litter wardens was set up. This comprises 12 local men who see to it that the litter, especially around the school, is kept to a minimum and disposed of safely. They have been furnished with rubber boots, gloves, rakes and wheelbarrows and take their duties very seriously. They receive a monthly supply of maize flour.

It is planned that a co-operative, similar to the Ladies, will be set up for the men where they can learn new skills.

#### **Projects:**

##### Fish Farming:

Fish stocks in Lake Victoria are declining, and new government regulations on fishing net mesh size, intended to conserve the stocks, make it increasingly difficult for the fishermen to scratch a living. We want to set up a fish farming co-operative, rearing fish in floating cages on the lake, as an alternative livelihood for them.



Initial capital costs of the venture are not high, less than €1500 to make three cages as a pilot project, but it then takes about 8 months to bring the fish fry to marketable size, and the feeding and related costs during this time will be about €9000. Thereafter it should be a self-sustaining venture. With provision for some initial training and support by experienced cage fish farmers, we estimate that we will need about €12,000 to get the project started.

##### Eco-toilet:

The renovated toilet block is fully operational. The next phase of the development is to get the waste products utilised. The ladies' co-operative is successfully growing vegetables, making a useful supplement to their diet, but they are now being shown how to use the urine from the toilet as fertiliser. Trials elsewhere in Uganda show that this greatly increases yield. The solids, after a suitable period maturing, make an excellent soil enricher, so we

hope to try using it to enrich the very sandy soil around the landing site.

### **2016 Volunteer Trip:**

Last year 8 volunteers travelled to Uganda, some staying for 2 weeks and others for 3. It was a very successful trip with many projects being achieved including painting 2 dormitories, re-walling the Bbaale school with papyrus mats, mending the fence around the school, visiting other schools in the surrounding area and doing the feeding and clothing programme for 30 very needy families in the community. As the team was mostly made up of



teachers much of the time was spent assisting the teachers in the kindergarten and primary classes in the Bbaale school. Two of the volunteers visited 3 schools for children with special needs in Kampala where they supported the teachers and supplied them with resources and teaching aids.

Thirty of the ladies in the co-operative were taught how to hand sew re-usable sanitary pads and 3 of the volunteers undertook to give the ladies English lessons and supplied them with study books.



Much fun was had when the volunteers attended an inter schools debate, and netball and soccer matches.

Other interesting experiences included being invited to a local wedding and attending a reception at the Irish Ambassador's residence.

### **A Volunteer's View:**

April 2016, with the decision made to volunteer for the UgaIrish team, I got busy fundraising and raising awareness at home and at work. However, until we set foot in Uganda I was completely unaware how lucky I was to be involved with this amazing organization that does such meaningful work with such wonderful people. As day followed day, through many unforgettable experiences, I knew that this was what a previous volunteer meant about "Not being able to put it into words".

UgaIrish really involve you in as many projects as possible, from the school to the men and women's co-op, knitting to painting, and many more! My most memorable moment of the trip was arriving in Bbaale on day one when all the children from the school came bursting out to greet us with big smiles on their faces and openness in their hearts. They didn't know who we were, but that didn't matter. The women and men of the co-ops were humbling to be around. The women brought out their knitting and we were greeted with fantastic work. The men had clearly been very active in keeping the town clean and tidy. I was



very inspired by both co-ops showing that they want nothing more than to better themselves, their families and their community. Some of the ongoing projects that we were involved in included growing their crops, knitting and sewing, keeping the village a clean and safe place for them and their children, teaching in the UgaIrish-built school, sponsorship of the children, maintenance of completed projects, the on-going work with families and individuals within the community, the development and maintenance of the water pump and many more! I too find it difficult to put into words the impact that the trip to Baale had on me as an individual. I can only hope to be lucky enough to work with this amazing organization again in the future.

### **2017 Volunteer Trip:**

There will be 10 volunteers, aged from 18 to 71, going out to Uganda in the middle of June. The group will be there for 2 weeks and a visit to a safari park is planned during their stay.

As usual there will be plenty of projects to keep the team busy. These will include building an extra toilet for the Bbaale school, assisting the teachers, meeting with the local council to obtain the registration of the land for a permanent school in Bbaale Landing Site, helping to build fish tanks for the fish farming project, giving English lessons to the ladies in the co-operative, helping in the vegetable gardens etc. There is something for everyone no matter what skills you may have.

### **Fundraising:**

The volunteers are working hard organising fundraising events which include the annual walk along the Barrow Track on 1st May, a raffle of a painting by artist Andrew Small, a night in Meaney's pub Leighlinbridge, Coffee mornings, Cake sales etc.

A very successful table quiz was held in the Brogue Maker Pub in Kilkenny on 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

You can see details of these events on our facebook page or support them through PayPal on our website at [ugairishproject.org](http://ugairishproject.org)

Almost every penny raised by Ugairish goes directly to the projects mentioned above.



[www.ugairishproject.org](http://www.ugairishproject.org)

Registered Charity:- RCN 20073831 (Revenue CHY 18988)

Chairperson:- Siobhán Kinsella Secretary:-Roísín Buckley, Treasurer:- Austin Kinsella, Fran Stilwell Committee:- Joan Doyle, Eric Stilwell